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Lars-Erik Jonsson et al.

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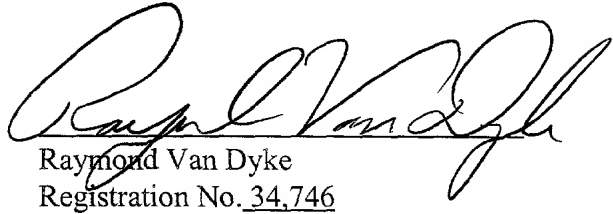
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JENKENS & GILCHRIST

Date: September 26, 2000

JENKENS & GILCHRIST  
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 3200  
Dallas, Texas 75202-2799  
214/855-4708

  
Raymond Van Dyke  
Registration No. 34,746

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**EFFICIENT HEADER COMPRESSION CONTEXT UPDATE  
IN PACKET COMMUNICATIONS**

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The invention relates generally to packet communications and, more particularly, to header compression in packet communications.

**5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

Due to the tremendous success of the Internet, it has become a challenging task to make use of the Internet Protocol IP (see, e.g., Jon Postel, *Internet Protocol*, DARPA RFC 791, September 1981, incorporated herein by

reference) over all kind of links. However, because the IP protocols were designed for wired links with high bandwidth capabilities, and because packet headers of the IP protocols are rather large, it is not always a simple task to use IP protocols with narrow band links, for example cellular links. If we consider the scenario when the IP protocols are used for real-time data, for example ordinary speech, the User Datagram Protocol UDP (see, e.g., Jon Postel, *User Datagram Protocol*, DARPA RFC 768, August 1980, incorporated herein by reference) and the Real-Time Transport Protocol RTP (see, e.g., Henning Schulzrinne, Stephen L. Casner, Ron Frederick and Van Jacobson, *RTP: A Transport Protocol for Real-Time Applications*, IETF RFC 1889, IETF Audio/Video Transport Working Group, January 1996, incorporated herein by reference) are applied on top of IP. Together they require a total amount of 40 header octets (IP 20, UDP 8 and RTP 12 octets). If we combine these header requirements with ordinary speech usage, which may have frame sizes as low as 15-20 octets, the header part will disadvantageously represent more than 70% of the packet.

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5 The term header compression (HC) comprises the art of transparently minimizing the necessary bandwidth for information carried in headers on a per-hop basis over point-to-point links. Header compression takes advantage of the fact that some fields in the headers are not changing within a flow, and that most header changes are small and/or predictable. Conventional header compression schemes make use of these facts and send static information only initially, while changing fields are sent either as uncompressed values (e.g., for completely random information) or as differences (or deltas) from packet to packet, the latter typically referred to as difference (or delta) encoding.

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15 Conventional header compression/decompression schemes are often realized using state machines, and the challenging task is to keep the compressor and decompressor states (or contexts) consistent with each other.

20 In general, there are two different conventional techniques to keep the de-compressor context updated. The first technique uses periodic refreshes wherein absolute header data is sent. An advantage of this

10

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applications. The obvious disadvantages are dependence  
on the back channel of the duplex link, sensitivity to  
lost packets on the link, and the high number of  
consecutive lost packets that will occur in case of an  
5 invalid context (and associated refresh request) when the  
RTT is high.

For all header compression schemes, two measures  
describe their performance. Compression efficiency  
describes how much the headers are compressed. This can  
10 be expressed by the average or maximal header size,  
combinations of both, or in other ways. Robustness  
describes how well the scheme handles loss on the link.  
Will loss of a packet make the header contexts  
inconsistent resulting in a large number of subsequent  
15 lost packets?

Thus, header compression schemes seek a balance  
between compression efficiency and robustness. More  
robustness requires more header overhead, while more  
efficiency results in less robustness. Efficient schemes  
20 therefore typically have some weakness in their  
robustness, meaning that context updates on request are  
needed.



Currently, there exist a number of different conventional header compression schemes. In fact, they are not really different schemes but different development states of the same one. The earliest proposals (see, e.g., Van Jacobson, *Compressing TCP/IP Headers for Low-Speed Serial Links*, IETF RDC 1144, IETF Network Working Group, February 1990, incorporated herein by reference) handle only compression of TCP (see, e.g., Jon Postel, *Transmission Control Protocol*, DARPA RFC 761, January 1980, incorporated herein by reference) flows, while ideas have later evolved to make compression of UDP and also RTP headers possible (see, e.g., Mikael Degermark, Björn Nordgren and Stephen Pink, *IP Header Compression*, IETF RFC 2507, IETF Network Working Group, February 1999, incorporated herein by reference; and Steven Casner and Van Jacobson, *Compressing IP/UDP/RTP Headers for Low-Speed Serial Links*, IETF RFC 2508, IETF Network Working Group, February 1999, incorporated herein by reference).

There are also new proposals like the ROCCO scheme (Lars-Erik Jonsson, Mikael Degermark, Hans Hannu, Krister Svanbro, *Robust Checksum-based Header Compression*

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(ROCCO), Internet Draft (work in progress), October 1999, incorporated herein by reference) under development for increased robustness. Up until now, little attention has been paid to context update procedures. The methods used  
5 have usually been very simple and unsophisticated. One of the reasons for that is probably that these procedures in general are not subject to standardization. Also, context updates on request have been considered only as fall-back solutions. However, when header compression is  
10 used over error-prone links with long round-trip times and for data with real-time requirements, sophisticated context update procedures would make significant improvements to the performance.

It is desirable in view of the foregoing to update  
15 an invalidated decompressor context as fast as possible with a minimal increase in header overhead. This can be divided into five parts: (1) when to start sending update requests; (2) how to make sure that update requests are delivered to the compressor; (3) what to  
20 include in update requests; (4) how to react to update requests received at the compressor side; (5) how to make

sure that context updates are delivered to the decompressor; and (6) how to verify a correct context.

5 The invention provides for relatively fast and reliable context updates with relatively low overhead by:  
10 sending anticipatory context update requests before decompressor context invalidation is detected; sending redundant context update requests; and sending redundant context updates. Transmission parameters associated with both update requests and updates can be controlled appropriately to improve their chances for delivery, and  
15 needless update requests can be identified and ignored at the header compression side.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIGURE 1 diagrammatically illustrates an exemplary packet communication system in which the present invention may be implemented.

5           FIGURE 2 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of the packet receiving station of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 3 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 2.

10           FIGURE 3A illustrates an alternative operation that can be performed by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 2.

15           FIGURE 4 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of another exemplary embodiment of the packet receiving station of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 5 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 4.

20           FIGURE 6 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of an exemplary embodiment of the packet transmitting station of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 7 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet transmitting station of FIGURE 6.

FIGURE 8 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of the packet transmitting station of FIGURE 1 and the packet receiving station of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 9 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the embodiments of FIGURE 8.

FIGURE 10 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of another exemplary embodiment of the packet transmitting station of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 11 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet transmitting station of FIGURE 10.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIGURE 1 diagrammatically illustrates an exemplary packet communication system which can implement the present invention. A packet transmitting station 11 transmits data packets across a packet communication channel 12 to a packet receiving station 14. The packet transmitting station 11 includes a header compressor (HC) 15 for providing header compression, and the packet receiving station 14 includes a header decompressor (HD) 16 for providing header decompression. The packet receiving station 14 can selectively transmit a context update request (CUR) across the channel 12 to the packet transmitting station 11. The packet transmitting station 11 can then respond to the context update request by transmitting a context update (CU) across the channel 12 to the packet receiving station 14.

In the example of FIGURE 1, the channel 12 includes a narrow-band link 13, for example a radio link. In such an example, the packet transmitting station 11 can be a radio transmitting station, for example a fixed or mobile station operating in a cellular telecommunications network. Similarly, where the narrow-band link 13 is a

radio link, the packet receiving station 14 can be, for example, a fixed or mobile radio receiving station operating in a cellular telecommunications network.

Although the above-described use of context update  
5 requests and corresponding context updates is generally well known in the art, the manner in which context updates are requested and then provided can significantly affect the compression efficiency of a given header compression scheme. According to the present invention,  
10 and as described in detail below, context updates are requested and provided in such a manner that deficiencies in the robustness of the header compression scheme are at least partially concealed.

FIGURE 2 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent  
15 portions of exemplary embodiments of the packet receiving station 14 of FIGURE 1. The embodiments of FIGURE 2 can, for example, speed up the context update procedure during a long burst of lost packets on a packet communication channel having a large round-trip time. In the  
20 embodiment of FIGURE 2, a timer 23 is provided to indicate the elapsed time since the last packet in a given packet flow was received. Due to the fact that the

normal packet interval (i.e., the normal time between receipt of consecutive packets in the packet flow) is usually known, if another packet is not received within this time interval, then this may be an indication of a packet loss and impending invalidation of the packet receiving station's header compression context.

In FIGURE 2, an incoming packet section 21 receives incoming packets from the packet communication channel, and can process the incoming packets in any desired conventional manner, including providing header decompression. According to the present invention, the incoming packet section 21 is coupled to the timer 23 for signaling the timer each time a packet is received from the channel. A packet received signal 22 causes the timer 23 to load the packet interval value and begin timing. If the packet interval time elapses before another packet is received at the incoming packet section (and signaled at 22 to timer 23), the timer 23 provides a timeout signal to a context update request generator 25.

The context update request generator 25 responds to the timeout signal by generating an appropriate context



update request, and providing the context update request to an outgoing packet section 27. This request is made based on the possibility of context invalidation, even though such invalidation has not yet been actually  
5     ascertained. The outgoing packet section 27 can process outgoing packets in any desired conventional fashion, including producing a suitable packet that will carry the generated context update request. The outgoing packet section 27 outputs outgoing packets, including those  
10     containing context update requests, to the packet communication channel. In some embodiments, the context update request generated at 25 can include an identifying indication that the context update request has been generated early, in anticipation of an expected  
15     decompressor context invalidation (e.g., in view of a longer-than-expected interval between receipt of consecutive packets in the packet flow).

As shown at 26 in FIGURE 2, the context update request generator 25 can also be triggered to produce a  
20     CUR in response to any other desired condition(s), for example a detected decompressor context invalidation.

FIGURE 3 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 2. After a packet from a given packet flow is received at 31, the timer is started at 33. The timer operates until  
5 either a timeout occurs at 35, or the next packet is received (and optionally identified as an early request) at 39. If a timeout occurs at 35 before the next packet is received at 39, then a context update request is sent at 37 (and optionally identified as an early request).  
10 On the other hand, if the next packet is received at 39 prior to the occurrence of a timeout at 35, then the timer is started again at 33. In some embodiments, the timer can be restarted at 33 after sending a context update request at 37, as indicated by the broken line in  
15 FIGURE 3. Such embodiments provide for the possibility of sending a series of redundant context update requests if the timer times out more than once before the next packet is received.

In some embodiments, information from lower layers  
20 can be provided to the context update request generator 25, to help distinguish between a long packet loss and inactivity in the packet flow. For example, a checksum

error at 29 in FIGURE 2 would indicate that a timeout  
from timer 23 means that a long packet loss has occurred  
and thus a context update request is needed. However,  
lack of a checksum error at 29 would indicate that the  
5 timeout is due to inactivity in the packet flow, so no  
context update request would be needed. The operation of  
such embodiments is also illustrated in FIGURE 3A, when  
considered with FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 4 diagrammatically illustrates pertinent  
10 portions of another exemplary embodiment of the packet  
receiving station of FIGURE 1. In FIGURE 4, the incoming  
packet section 21 provides to a header decompressor 41  
the headers of the incoming packets. The header  
decompressor 41 can use conventional decompression  
15 techniques to decompress the headers. The header  
decompressor 41 provides control signals 42 and 43 to a  
context update request generator 44. In particular, the  
signal 42 indicates that the header decompressor has  
determined that a context update request is needed, for  
20 example, in response to context invalidation in one or  
more header fields. The signal 43 is produced by the

header decompressor 41 when a context update has been received.

A timer 45 is coupled to the context update request generator 44, and receives therefrom a CUR sent signal indicating that a needed context update request has been sent. In response to the CUR sent signal, the timer 45 loads a value  $T_{wait}$  and begins timing based on that value. When the time  $T_{wait}$  expires, the timer 45 outputs a timeout signal to a repeat CUR input of the context update request generator 44. With this arrangement, the context update request generator 44 generates a context update request in response to the signal 42, and can generate a sequence of additional redundant context update requests that are timewise separated by the time  $T_{wait}$ , which sequence continues until a context update is received. The sequence of context update requests output by the context update request generator 44 can be processed by the outgoing packet section 27 in generally the same manner as described above with respect to FIGURE 2.

FIGURE 5 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 4. When it is determined at 51 that a context update request

is needed, the context update request is sent at 53. Upon sending the context update request at 53, the timer is started at 55. It is thereafter determined whether a timeout occurs at 57 before the requested context update is received at 59. If so, then another context update request is sent at 53, and the steps at 55 through 59 are repeated. On the other hand, if the requested context update is received at 59 before a timeout occurs at 57, then an indication of another needed context update request is awaited at 51.

The conditions described above relative to FIGURES 4 and 5 for triggering a context update request are further examples of the "other conditions" mentioned above and illustrated at 26 in FIGURE 2. Also, the "CUR needed" signal at 42 in FIGURE 4 can, in some embodiments, be the timeout signal from a packet interval timer such as shown at 23 in FIGURE 2 and described above.

By periodically repeating the context update requests in FIGURES 4 and 5, the chances of successfully updating the context are increased. The amount of time,  $T_{wait}$ , to wait before repeating the context update request

can be based on RTT estimations. By so doing, unnecessary requests can be avoided, which saves bandwidth in the packet channel.

The value of  $T_{\text{wait}}$  can be determined from parameters  
5 such as RTT, channel capacity and the desired quality of the service. If  $T_{\text{wait}}$  is set equal to the RTT, then unnecessary context update requests are avoided but, if the channel is bad, the quality of service will deteriorate. If there is a large amount of available  
10 bandwidth, it could be better to set  $T_{\text{wait}}$  to an amount smaller than the RTT. The time  $T_{\text{wait}}$  should preferably be some fraction of the estimated RTT, for example 50% of RTT. The value of  $T_{\text{wait}}$  can be selected in view of the  
15 aforementioned parameters and considerations. In addition, or alternatively, the value of  $T_{\text{wait}}$  can be empirically determined by experimentation in view of the desired quality of service and the expected channel conditions (e.g., RTT and capacity).

The RTT estimate used to determine  $T_{\text{wait}}$  can be  
20 determined in any desired manner, one example of which follows. When the packet receiving station transmits a packet containing a context update request, the outgoing

packet section 27 can note and store the current time. When the corresponding context update packet is received by the packet receiving station, the incoming packet section 21 can note and store the current time. Then, an  
5 RTT estimator 49 coupled to the incoming packet section 21 and the outgoing packet section 27 can compute the RTT estimate as the difference between the time at which the context update request packet was sent and the time at which the corresponding context update packet was  
10 received. A plurality of RTT estimates can be calculated in this manner as requests are sent and corresponding updates received, and the RTT estimates can be used for statistical processing, for example, calculating the mean value of the RTT estimates. This mean value can then be  
15 used by the RTT estimator to select  $T_{wait}$ .

FIGURE 6 illustrates pertinent portions of an exemplary embodiment of the packet transmitting station of FIGURE 1. In the packet transmitting station embodiment of FIGURE 6, an incoming packet section 60  
20 forwards received context update requests to a context update request filter 61 (provided, for example, in the HC 15 of FIGURE 1). The context update request filter 61

determines whether or not a received context update request should trigger a context update. If the filter 61 determines that a context update should be generated in response to the received context update request, an indication of such determination is signaled at 62 to a context update generator 63 (provided, for example, in the HC 15 of FIGURE 1). The generated context update (CU) is provided by the generator 63 to an outgoing packet section 66, which inserts the context update into an outgoing packet.

The context update request filter 61 can determine whether or not to send a context update based on knowledge of the RTT and the time at which the last packet was sent to the station that generated the context update request. As shown at 64 in FIGURE 6, the outgoing packet section 66 signals the context update request filter 61 when each outgoing packet is sent out, and the context update request filter 61 also receives as input information indicative of the RTT. This RTT information can be provided from the packet receiving station, which can estimate RTT in the exemplary manners described above.



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The context update request filter 61 of FIGURE 6 can be used, for example, to filter out and ignore an unnecessary early context update request sent by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 2. For example, the packet receiving station of FIGURE 2 could send an unnecessary early context update request in a situation where the packet transmitting station simply did not send (or has not sent) a packet for a period of time longer than the packet interval applied to the timer 23 of FIGURE 2. The context update request filter request 61 can include a timer 68 similar to that of FIGURE 2 for monitoring the elapsed time between the packets that are sent in a given packet flow. The timer 68 is coupled to the packet sent signal at 64. As described above, a packet containing an early context update request as generated in FIGURE 2 can also contain information explicitly identifying the context update request as an early request. Thus, if such a context update request is received by the filter 61 of FIGURE 6, it is easily identified, and can be ignored if the filter 61 determines from its timer 68 that the received early

context update request was generated unnecessarily (e.g., due to a long idle period between packet transmissions).

On the other hand, if a context update request produced by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 2 is not explicitly identified as an early request, the context update request filter 61 may nevertheless be able to identify such an early context update request. In particular, if the timer in filter 61 indicates that more than one RTT has elapsed since the last packet was sent in the packet flow, the filter 61 can consider the context update request to be an unnecessary early request that can be ignored.

The context update request filter 61 of FIGURE 6 can also filter out and ignore a context update request if it is determined that the context update request is a redundant request which has already been responded to with a context update. Examples of such redundant requests are described above, and other examples are described below.

FIGURE 7 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the packet receiving station of FIGURE 6. When a context update request is received at 71, it is

thereafter determined at 73 whether a corresponding context update has already been sent. If so, then the received context update request is merely a redundant request, and is ignored at 79. If it is determined at 73 that a context update corresponding to the received request has not been sent, it is then determined at 75 whether or not the context update request is an early request triggered by inactivity of the packet transmitting station. If it can be determined at 75 that the context update request was triggered by inactivity at the packet transmitting station, then the context update request is ignored at 79, and the next context update request is thereafter awaited at 71. Otherwise, a corresponding context update is sent at 77, and the next context update request is thereafter awaited at 71.

As shown by broken lines in FIGURE 7, the decision block 73 can be omitted in embodiments that do not employ redundant context update requests, and the decision block at 75 can be omitted in embodiments that do not employ early context update requests.

If context control information such as context update requests and their corresponding context updates

are sent over lossy links, it is desirable to reduce the transmission error probability associated with such transmissions, as compared to other less critical transmissions. This transmission error probability can  
5 be reduced using a variety of techniques according to the present invention.

As one example, a context update request and the corresponding context update can be repeated in N consecutive packets, or with a suitable frequency F.  
10 Alternatively, the repetition in N consecutive packets can itself be repeated with frequency F. The values of N and/or F can be chosen so that the probability of failure to deliver the request or the update is reduced to a suitable level below that of less critical types of  
15 communications on the link. Suitable values of N or F can be determined, for example, empirically, through experimentation under expected channel conditions.

If a given context update request or context update is repeated in N consecutive packets, the information in  
20 these packets can, in some embodiments, be formatted such that the N packets can be combined to form a valid request or update. This can be done, for example, with

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soft combining on the physical layer. In particular,  
several context updates may be sent in a row, each  
containing a fixed number of bits with information about  
a correct context. If several such context updates are  
5 received at the packet receiving station, a correct  
context update can be determined by soft combining at  
layer 1. When each bit is demodulated, the probability  
for bit error of a single bit may be decreased by taking  
into account the demodulated value of the corresponding  
10 bit in the previous context update. Hence, a soft  
combining can be performed by comparing current and  
previous context updates to secure a correctly received  
context update. As another example, this could be done  
at a logical level with a simple majority decision. If,  
15 for example, two out of three context updates say that  
the value of a header field (for example the type of  
service, or TOS, field) is 10, and the third context  
update says that the value is 20, then the value of 10  
should be chosen. This procedure of majority decisions  
20 may be applied at the bit level, the field level, or on  
the level of entire headers. This choice of level

involves only the desired size of the set of bits upon which the majority decision is to be based.

If the packets are transmitted in a wireless system or in any system with variable transmission output power, such variable transmission power can also be utilized. The output power for the packets containing context update requests or context updates can be raised (relative to less critical types of communication transmissions) by a factor  $K_p$ , so that the probability of failing to effect delivery of the context update request or the context update is reduced to a desired level below that of less critical types of communications on the link. The factor  $K_p$  can be determined, for example, empirically through experimentation.

If the packets are transmitted in a system that utilizes channel coding, the channel encoding rate  $R^*$  ( $R^* = \text{useful information bit rate/channel decoded data bit rate}$ ) can be decreased (relative to less critical types of communication transmissions) until the probability of failure to deliver the context update request or the context update is reduced to a suitable level below that of less critical types of communications on the link.

The desired encoding rate  $R$  can be determined, for example, empirically through experimentation.

In some embodiments, the aforementioned parameters  $N$ ,  $F$ ,  $K_p$  and  $R$  can also be made adaptive to the channel quality. Channel quality can be measured in conventional terms such as, for example, bit error rate, packet loss rate, etc. The parameters  $N$ ,  $F$ ,  $K_p$  and  $R$  can be continuously adjusted so that the probability of failure to deliver context update requests and context updates is kept to a desired level. The adaptability of the aforementioned parameters to the channel quality measures can be implemented, for example, using a lookup table wherein the parameters  $N$ ,  $F$ ,  $K_p$  and  $R$  are indexed against conventionally available channel quality measures such as bit error rate, packet loss rate, etc. The information in such lookup tables can be determined, for example, empirically through experimentation.

FIGURE 8 illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of the packet transmitting station and the packet receiving station of FIGURE 1. In FIGURE 8, a transmission parameter generator 81 is triggered when transmission of context control information such as a

context update request or a context update is initiated at the input of a context control information generator 82, such as a context update request generator or a context update generator. In response to initiation of the context update request (or context update), the transmission parameter generator produces one or more of the aforementioned parameters N, F, Kp and R. As shown in FIGURE 8, the parameters N and F are provided to the context control information generator 82, while the parameter Kp is provided to a power amplifier, and the parameter R is provided to a channel coder. FIGURE 8 also illustrates in broken line the exemplary alternative of providing channel quality information as an input to the transmission parameter generator, producing the transmission parameter(s) as a function of the channel quality information, and varying the transmission parameter(s) in response to variations in the channel quality.

FIGURE 9 illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the embodiments of FIGURE 8. After it is determined at 91 that a context update request (or context update) has been initiated, one or more of the



transmission parameters are obtained and applied at 92. As mentioned above, in various embodiments, any of the transmission parameters illustrated in FIGURES 8 and 9 can be used alone or in any desired combination with any other parameter(s). It should also be noted that any (or any desired combination) of the transmission parameters of FIGURES 8 and 9 can be used in conjunction with the context update requests produced in FIGURES 2-5 and/or the context updates produced in FIGURES 6 and 7.

Pertinent portions of a further exemplary packet transmitting station are illustrated in FIGURE 10. In some instances, the header compressor HC sends to the header decompressor in the packet receiving station header information that is enhanced relative to typical compressed header information. As one example of such enhanced header information (EHI), prior to commencing header compression operations, full headers must typically be sent to the packet receiving station until the header decompressor HD acknowledges that its context is properly initialized to begin receiving compressed headers. As other examples of enhanced header information, although changes in header field values such

as time stamp field values and IPv4 (IP version 4) ID  
field values are normally predictable at the header  
decompressor without receiving any delta values therefor,  
if one of these fields changes by an unusually large  
5 amount, then delta values are typically transmitted for  
those fields until an acknowledgment (ACK) is received  
from the header decompressor.

The above described use of enhanced header  
information EHI (e.g., full headers before compression is  
10 commenced, or delta values for time stamp fields and IPv4  
ID fields) is improved according to the invention as  
shown in FIGURE 10. For example, the aforementioned  
amount of time  $T_{WAIT}$  can be used by the header compressor  
HC in generally the same manner described above with  
15 respect to FIGURE 4 to periodically repeat the EHI until  
an acknowledgment ACK is received from the header  
decompressor.

FIGURE 11 illustrates exemplary operations that can  
be performed by the packet transmitting station pf FIGURE  
20 10. Comparing FIGURE 11 to FIGURE 5, it can be seen that  
the operations at 111, 113, 115, 117 and 119 are  
generally analogous to the respective operations at 51,

53, 55, 57 and 59 in FIGURE 5, except EHI is sent instead of a CUR, and ACK is received instead of CU.

It should also be noted that any (or any desired combination) of the transmission parameters of FIGURES 8 and 9 can be used in conjunction with the enhanced header information EHI produced in FIGURES 10-11. It should also be clear that these transmission parameters are applicable to EHI whether or not EHI is periodically repeated based on  $T_{wait}$ .

It will be evident to workers in the art that the inventive embodiments illustrated in FIGURES 1-11 above can be readily implemented, for example, by suitably modifying software, hardware or both in packet data processing portions of conventional packet transmitting and receiving stations.

Although exemplary embodiments of the present invention have been described above in detail, this does not limit the scope of the invention, which can be practiced in a variety of embodiments.

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1           1. A method of maintaining consistency between  
2 header compression contexts respectively associated with  
3 a packet transmitting station and a packet receiving  
4 station during a packet flow from the packet transmitting  
5 station to the packet receiving station, comprising:

6           determining whether a predetermined amount of  
7 time has elapsed without receiving at the packet  
8 receiving station a packet in the packet flow; and

9           sending a context update request from the  
10 packet receiving station to the packet transmitting  
11 station if the predetermined amount of time has elapsed  
12 without receiving a packet at the packet receiving  
13 station.

1           2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said  
2 predetermined amount of time is a time interval expected  
3 between consecutive packets in the packet flow.

1           3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said sending  
2 step includes explicitly identifying the context update

3 request as having been sent in response to expiration of  
4 the predetermined amount of time.

1 4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising  
2 receiving the context update request at the packet  
3 transmitting station, determining whether the context  
4 update request is unnecessary for context consistency,  
5 and ignoring the context update request if it is  
6 unnecessary for context consistency.

1 5. The method of Claim 4, wherein said step of  
2 determining whether the context update request is  
3 unnecessary for context consistency includes recognizing  
4 that the context update request has been sent in response  
5 to expiration of said predetermined amount of time,  
6 determining whether said predetermined amount of time has  
7 elapsed between successive packet transmissions in the  
8 packet flow, and deciding that the context update request  
9 is unnecessary for context consistency if it is  
10 determined that said predetermined amount of time has  
11 elapsed between successive packet transmissions in the  
12 packet flow.

1           6.    The method of Claim 4, wherein said step of  
2           determining whether the context update request is  
3           unnecessary for context consistency includes determining  
4           whether a round-trip-time associated with a packet  
5           communication channel through which the packet  
6           transmitting station and the packet receiving station  
7           communicate with one another has elapsed between  
8           successive packet transmissions in the packet flow, and  
9           deciding that the context update request is not necessary  
10          if the round-trip-time has elapsed between successive  
11          packet transmissions in the packet flow.

12           7.    A method of maintaining consistency between  
13           header compression contexts respectively associated with  
14           a packet transmitting station and a packet receiving  
15           station during a packet flow from the packet transmitting  
16           station to the packet receiving station, comprising:  
17           

18                 sending from the packet receiving station to  
19           the packet transmitting station a context update request  
20           in response to which a context update is expected; and

21                 if a predetermined amount of time since the  
22           context update request was sent elapses without receiving

11 the expected context update at the packet receiving  
12 station, sending the context update request from the  
13 packet receiving station to the packet transmitting  
14 station a second time.

1 8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the  
2 predetermined amount of time is a function of an  
3 estimated round-trip-time associated with a packet  
4 communication channel through which the packet  
5 transmitting station and the packet receiving station  
6 communicate with one another.

1 9. The method of Claim 7, further comprising  
2 sending the context update request from the packet  
3 receiving station to the packet transmitting station a  
4 third time if, since sending the context update request  
5 the second time, the predetermined amount of time elapses  
6 without receiving the expected context update at the  
7 packet receiving station.

1 10. The method of Claim 7, further comprising  
2 receiving a context update request at the packet

3 transmitting station, determining at the packet  
4 transmitting station whether a context update  
5 corresponding to the received context update request has  
6 already been sent from the packet transmitting station to  
7 the packet receiving station, and ignoring the received  
8 context update request if a corresponding context update  
9 has already been sent from the packet transmitting  
10 station to the packet receiving station.

11. A method of transmitting from a first packet  
communication station to a second packet communication  
station information including context control  
information, the context control information used to  
maintain consistency between header compression contexts  
respectively associated with the first and second packet  
communication stations, comprising:

transmitting information other than context  
control information between the first and second packet  
communication stations according to a first transmission  
parameter;



12 determining that context control information is  
13 to be transmitted from the first packet communication  
14 station to the second packet communication station;

15 in response to the determination that context  
16 control information is to be transmitted from the first  
17 packet communication station to the second packet  
18 communication station, providing a second transmission  
19 parameter according to which the context control  
20 information can be transmitted from the first packet  
21 communication station to the second packet communication  
22 station with a probability of delivery that exceeds a  
23 probability of delivery associated with said step of  
24 transmitting information other than context control  
25 information according to the first transmission  
26 parameter; and

27 transmitting the context control information  
28 from the first packet communication station to the second  
29 packet communication station according to the second  
30 transmission parameter.

1 12. The method of Claim 11, wherein said second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control

3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication  
5 station in a plurality of consecutively transmitted  
6 packets.

1 13. The method of Claim 12, wherein each of the  
2 consecutively transmitted packets includes all of the  
3 context control information.

4 14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the context  
5 control information includes a context update request,  
6 further comprising receiving the context update request  
7 at the second packet communication station, determining  
8 whether a context update corresponding to the received  
9 context update request has already been sent from the  
10 second packet communication station to the first packet  
11 communication station, and ignoring the received context  
update request if a corresponding context update has  
already been sent from the second packet communication  
station to the first packet communication station.

1           15. The method of Claim 11, wherein the context  
2 control information includes one of a context update and  
3 a context update request.

1           16. The method of Claim 11, wherein the second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication  
5 station in each of a plurality of packets respectively  
6 transmitted periodically in accordance with a  
7 predetermined frequency.

1           17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the context  
2 control information includes a context update request,  
3 further comprising receiving a context update request at  
4 the second packet communication station, determining  
5 whether a context update corresponding to the received  
6 context update request has already been sent from the  
7 second packet communication station to the first packet  
8 communication station, and ignoring the received context  
9 update request if a corresponding context update has

10 already been sent from the second packet communication  
11 station to the first packet communication station.

1 18. The method of Claim 16, wherein each of the  
2 periodically transmitted packets includes all of the  
3 context control information.

1 19. The method of Claim 11, wherein the second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication  
5 station at a higher power level than a power level  
6 specified by the first transmission parameter.

1 20. The method of Claim 11, wherein the second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication  
5 station using a lower channel coding rate than a channel  
6 coding rate specified by the first transmission  
7 parameter.

1           21. A method of processing header compression  
2 context update requests received at a header compression  
3 side of a packet communication link, comprising:

4           receiving a header compression context update  
5 request at the header compression side of the packet  
6 communication link;

7           determining whether the context update request  
8 is unnecessary for context consistency between the header  
9 compression side of the packet communication link and a  
10 header decompression side of the packet communication  
11 link; and

12           ignoring the received context update request if  
13 it is determined to be unnecessary for context  
14 consistency between the header compression side and the  
15 header decompression side of the packet communication  
16 link.

1           22. The method of Claim 21, wherein said  
2 determining step includes recognizing that the context  
3 update request was sent from the header decompression  
4 side in response to expiration of a predetermined amount  
5 of time between arrival at the header decompression side

6 of consecutive packets of a packet flow from the header  
7 compression side to the header decompression side.

1 23. The method of Claim 22, wherein said  
2 determining step includes determining whether said  
3 predetermined amount of time has elapsed between  
4 successive packet transmissions in the packet flow, and  
5 deciding that the context update request is unnecessary  
6 for context consistency if said predetermined amount of  
7 time has elapsed between successive packet transmissions  
8 in the packet flow.

1 24. The method of Claim 21, wherein said  
2 determining step includes determining whether a round-  
3 trip-time associated with the packet communication link  
4 has expired between successive packet transmissions in  
5 the packet flow, and deciding that the context update  
6 request is unnecessary for context consistency if the  
7 round-trip-time has expired between successive packet  
8 transmissions in the packet flow.

1           25. An apparatus for maintaining consistency  
2 between header compression contexts respectively  
3 associated with a packet transmitting station and a  
4 packet receiving station during a packet flow from the  
5 packet transmitting station to the packet receiving  
6 station, comprising:

7           a timer for determining whether a predetermined  
8 amount of time has elapsed without receiving at the  
9 packet receiving station a packet in the packet flow; and

10           a context update request generator coupled to  
11 said timer for sending a context update request from the  
12 packet receiving station to the packet transmitting  
13 station if the predetermined amount of time has elapsed  
14 without receiving a packet at the packet receiving  
15 station.

1           26. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein said  
2 predetermined amount of time is a time interval expected  
3 between consecutive packets in the packet flow.

1           27. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein said context  
2 update request generator is operable to explicitly

3 identify a context update request that has been sent in  
4 response to expiration of said predetermined amount of  
5 time.

1 28. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein said timer  
2 and said context update request generator are provided in  
3 the packet receiving station.

4 29. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein the packet  
5 receiving station is a radio communication station  
6 operable in a telecommunications network.

7 30. An apparatus for maintaining consistency  
8 between header compression contexts respectively  
9 associated with a packet transmitting station and a  
10 packet receiving station during a packet flow from the  
packet transmitting station to the packet receiving  
station, comprising:

a context update request generator for sending  
from the packet receiving station to the packet  
transmitting station a context update request in response  
to which a context update is expected;



11 a timer coupled to said context update request  
12 generator for determining whether, since a context update  
13 request was sent, a predetermined amount of time has  
14 elapsed without receiving the expected context update at  
15 the packet receiving station; and

16 said context update request generator operable  
17 for sending the context update request from the packet  
18 receiving station to the packet transmitting station a  
19 second time if the predetermined amount of time has  
20 elapsed without receiving the expected context update at  
21 the packet receiving station.

1 31. The apparatus of Claim 30, wherein the  
2 predetermined amount of time is a function of an  
3 estimated round-trip-time associated with a packet  
4 communication channel through which the packet  
5 transmitting station and the packet receiving station  
6 communicate with one another.

1 32. The apparatus of Claim 30, wherein said timer  
2 and said context update request generator are provided in  
3 the packet receiving station.

1           33. The apparatus of Claim 32, wherein the packet  
2 receiving station is a radio communication station  
3 operable in a telecommunications network.

1           34. An apparatus for transmitting from a first  
2 packet communication station to a second packet  
3 communication station information including context  
4 control information, the context control information used  
5 to maintain consistency between header compression  
6 contexts respectively associated with the first and  
7 second packet communication stations, comprising:

8           an output for transmitting information other  
9 than context control information between the first and  
10 second packet communication stations according to a first  
11 transmission parameter;

12           a context control information generator coupled  
13 to said output for generating context control information  
14 to be transmitted from the first packet communication  
15 station to the second packet communication station;

16           a transmission parameter generator having an  
17 input for receiving an indication that context control  
18 information generated by said context control information

19 generator is to be transmitted from the first packet  
20 communication station to the second packet communication  
21 station, said transmission parameter generator operable  
22 in response to said indication for providing a second  
23 transmission parameter according to which the context  
24 control information can be transmitted from the first  
25 packet communication station to the second packet  
26 communication station with a probability of delivery that  
27 exceeds a probability of delivery associated with  
28 transmission of information other than context control  
29 information according to the first transmission  
30 parameter; and

31 said output responsive to said second  
32 transmission parameter for transmitting the context  
33 control information from the first packet communication  
34 station to the second packet communication station  
35 according to the second transmission parameter.

1 35. The method of Claim 34, wherein said second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication

5 station in a plurality of consecutively transmitted  
6 packets.

1 36. The method of Claim 34, wherein the second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication  
5 station in each of a plurality of packets respectively  
6 transmitted periodically in accordance with a  
7 predetermined frequency.

1 37. The method of Claim 34, wherein the second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication  
5 station at a higher power level than a power level  
6 specified by the first transmission parameter.

1 38. The method of Claim 34, wherein the second  
2 transmission parameter specifies that the context control  
3 information is to be transmitted from the first packet  
4 communication station to the second packet communication

5 station using a lower channel coding rate than a channel  
6 coding rate specified by the first transmission  
7 parameter.

1 39. The apparatus of Claim 34, wherein said output,  
2 said context control information generator, and said  
3 transmission parameter generator are provided in the  
4 first packet communication station.

1 40. The apparatus of Claim 39, wherein the first  
2 packet communication station is a radio communication  
3 station operating in a telecommunications network.

1 41. The apparatus of Claim 34, wherein the context  
2 control information includes one of a context update and  
3 a context update request.

1 42. An apparatus for processing header compression  
2 context update requests received at a header compression  
3 side of a packet communication link, comprising:  
4 an input for receiving context update requests;

5 an output for sending context updates in  
6 response to receipt of context update requests at said  
7 input; and

8 a context update request filter coupled between  
9 said input and said output for determining whether a  
10 context update request is unnecessary for context  
11 consistency between the header compression side of the  
12 packet communication link and a header decompression side  
13 of the packet communication link and for preventing said  
14 output from sending a context update in response to a  
15 context update request that is determined to be  
16 unnecessary for context consistency.

00 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60  
1 43. The apparatus of Claim 42, wherein said context  
2 update request filter is operable to recognize when a  
3 context update request received at said input was sent  
4 from the header decompression side in response to  
5 expiration of a predetermined amount of time between  
6 arrival at the header decompression side of consecutive  
7 packets of a packet flow from the header compression side  
8 to the header decompression side.

1           44. The apparatus of Claim 43, wherein the context  
2 update request filter includes a timer for determining  
3 whether said predetermined amount of time has elapsed  
4 between successive packet transmissions in the packet  
5 flow, said context update request filter further operable  
6 for deciding that a received context update request is  
7 unnecessary for context consistency if said predetermined  
amount of time has elapsed between successive packet  
transmissions in the packet flow.

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2           45. The apparatus of Claim 42, wherein said context  
update request filter includes a timer for determining  
whether a round-trip-time associated with the packet  
communication link has expired between successive packet  
transmissions in the packet flow, said context update  
6 request filter further operable for deciding that a  
7 received context update request is unnecessary for  
8 context consistency if the round-trip-time has expired  
9 between successive packet transmissions in the packet  
10 flow.

1           46. The apparatus of Claim 42, wherein said input,  
2           said output, and said context update request filter are  
3           provided in a packet communication station at the header  
4           compression side of the packet communication link.

1           47. The apparatus of Claim 46, wherein the packet  
2           communication station is a radio communication station  
operable in a telecommunications network.



**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

5           In packet communications that utilize header  
compression/decompression, relatively fast and reliable  
header compression context updates can be accomplished  
with relatively low overhead by: sending anticipatory  
context update requests before decompressor context  
10 invalidation is detected; sending redundant context  
update requests; and sending redundant context updates.  
Transmission parameters associated with both context  
update requests and context updates can be controlled  
appropriately to improve their chances for delivery, and  
15 needless context update requests can be identified and  
ignored at the header compression side.

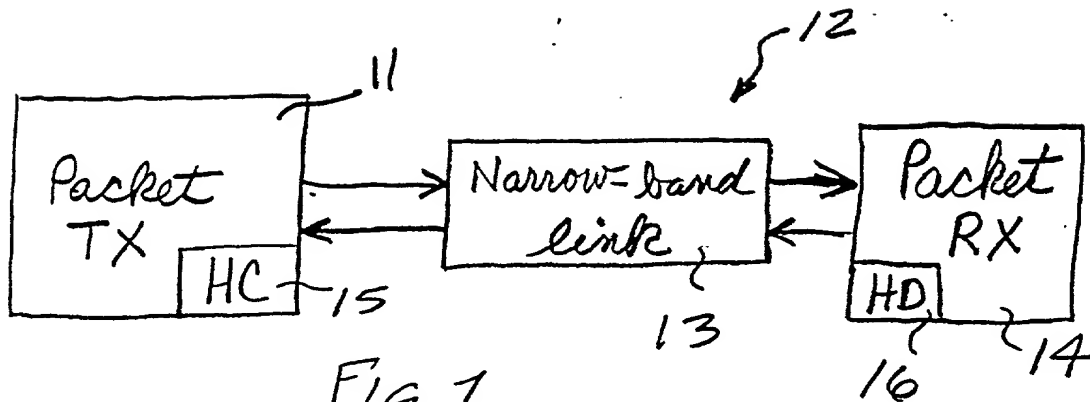


FIG. 1

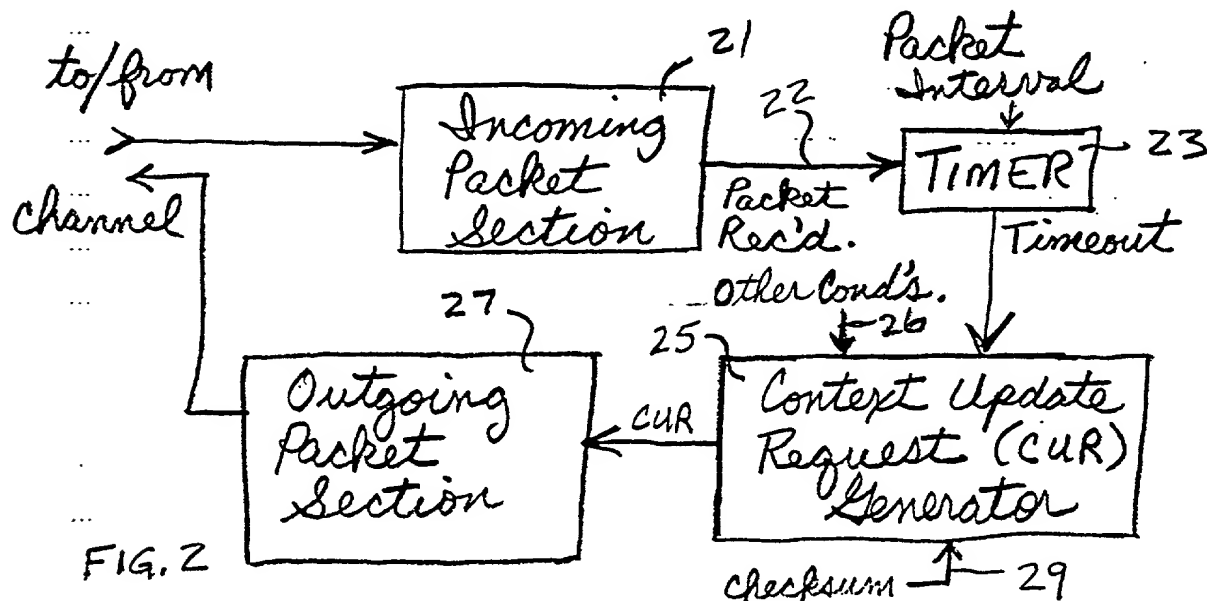


FIG. 2

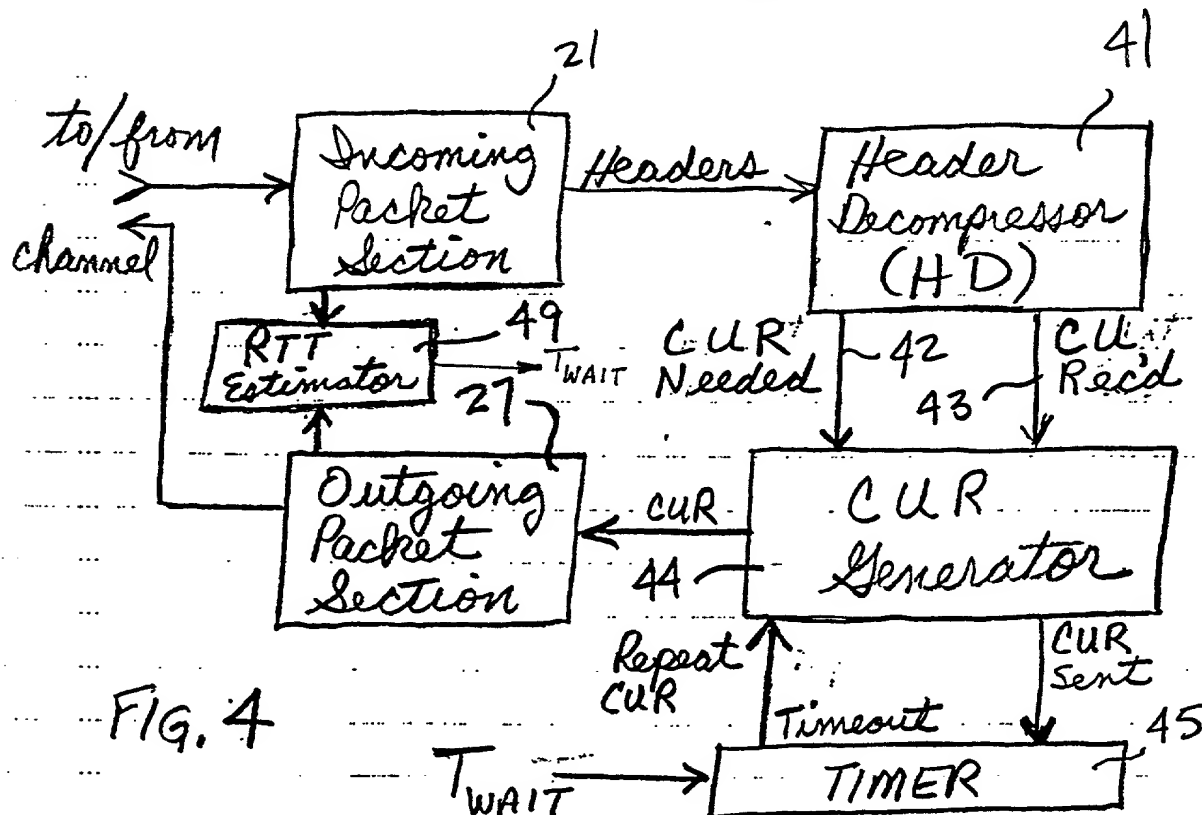


FIG. 4

009260-12ET/960

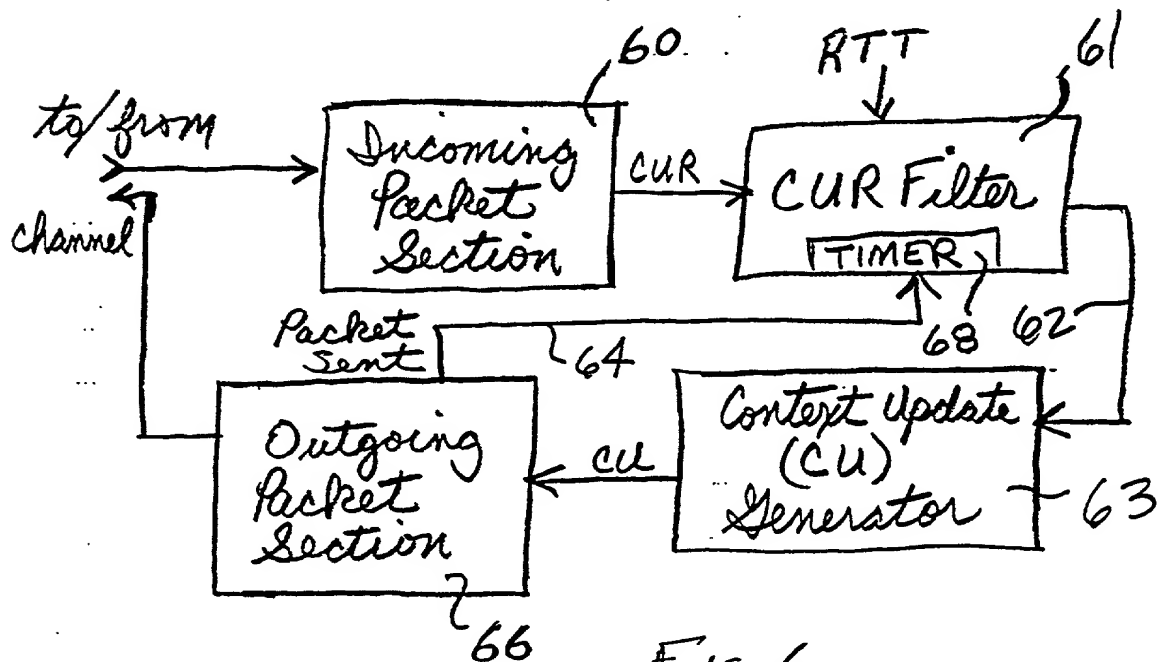
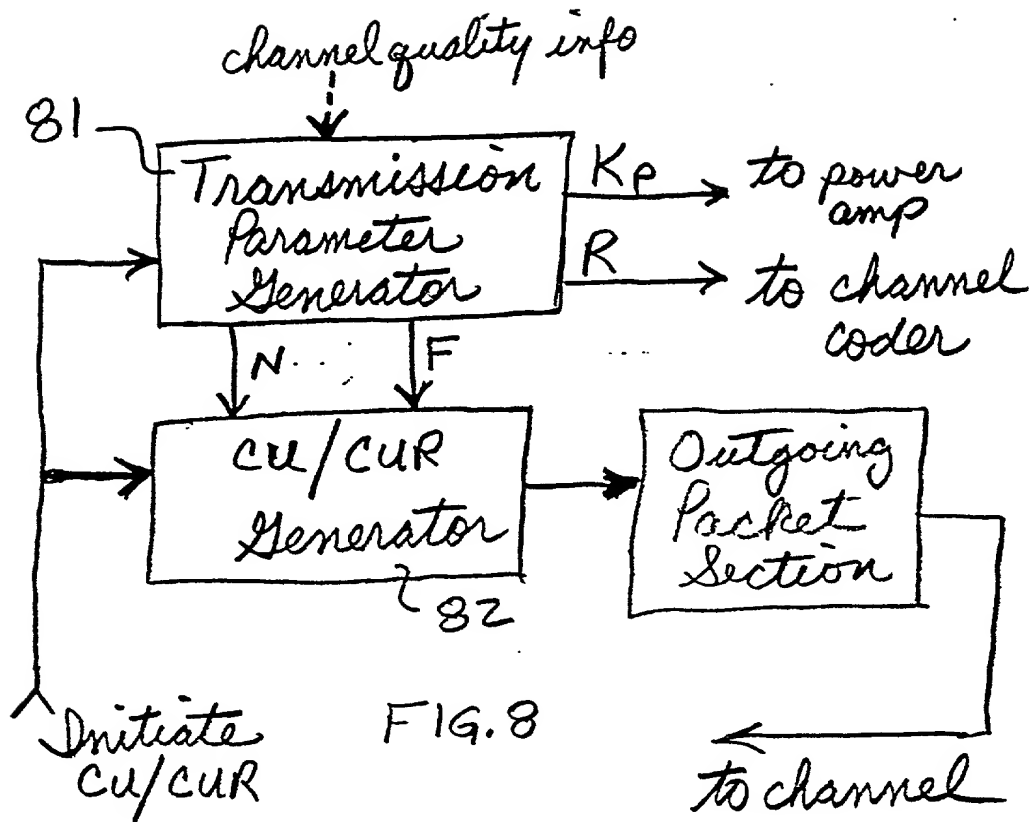


FIG. 6

003260" TEE 4 950

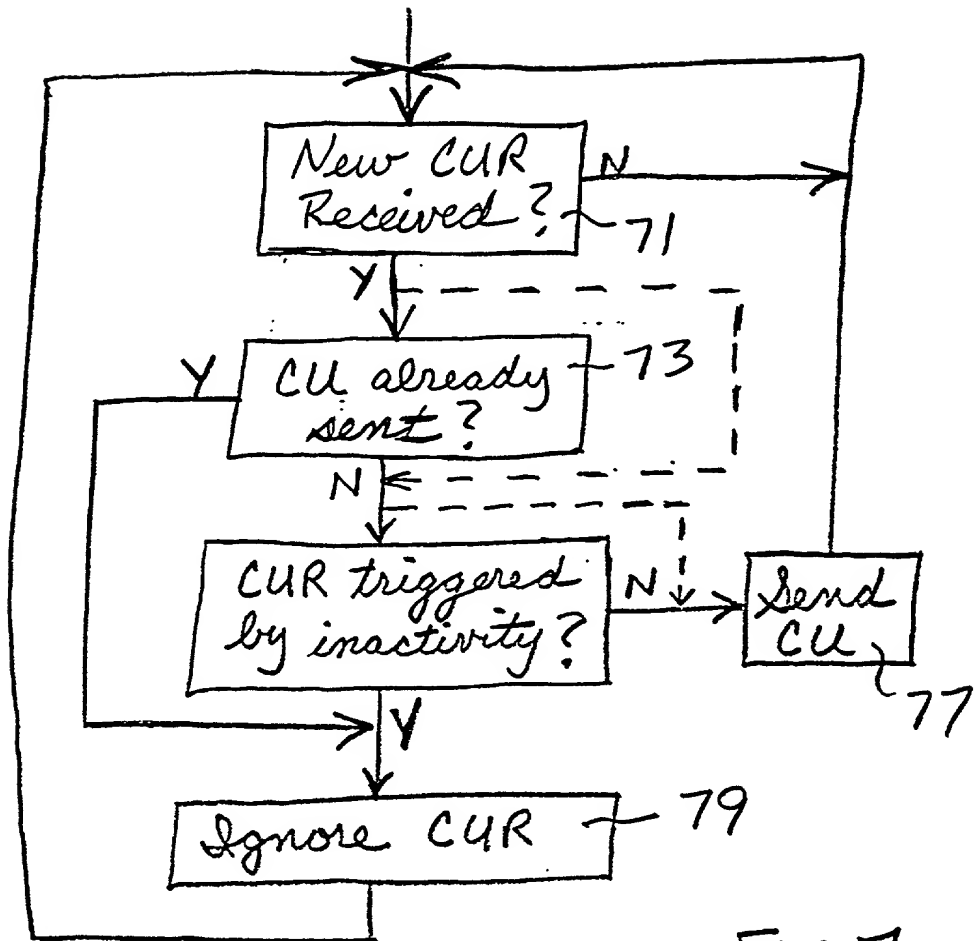
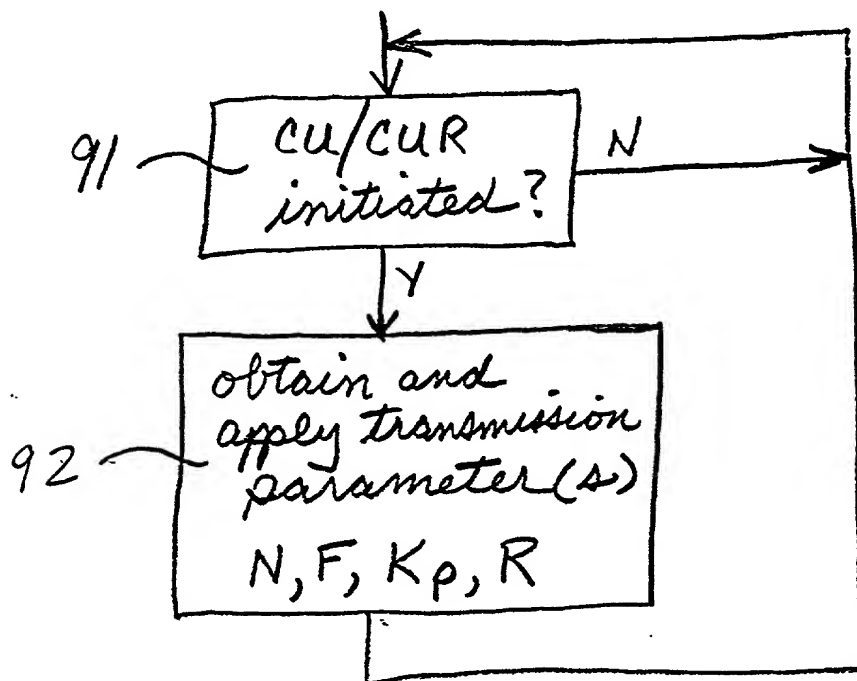
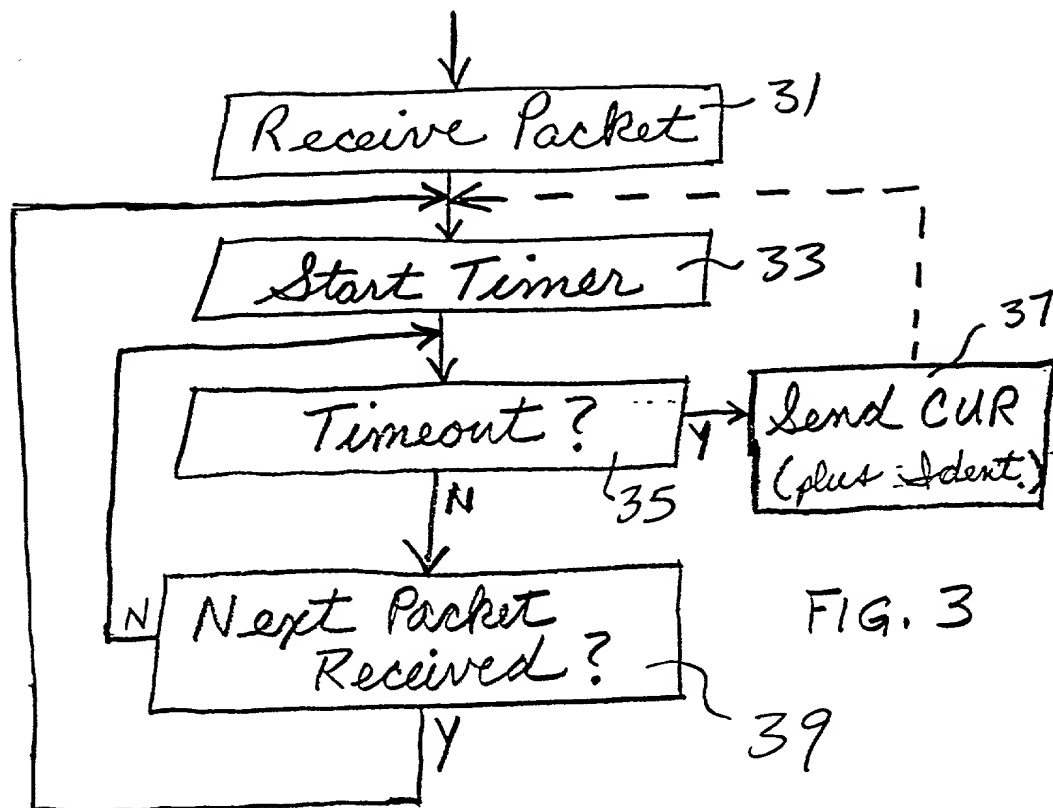


FIG. 7



005260 T2ET/360

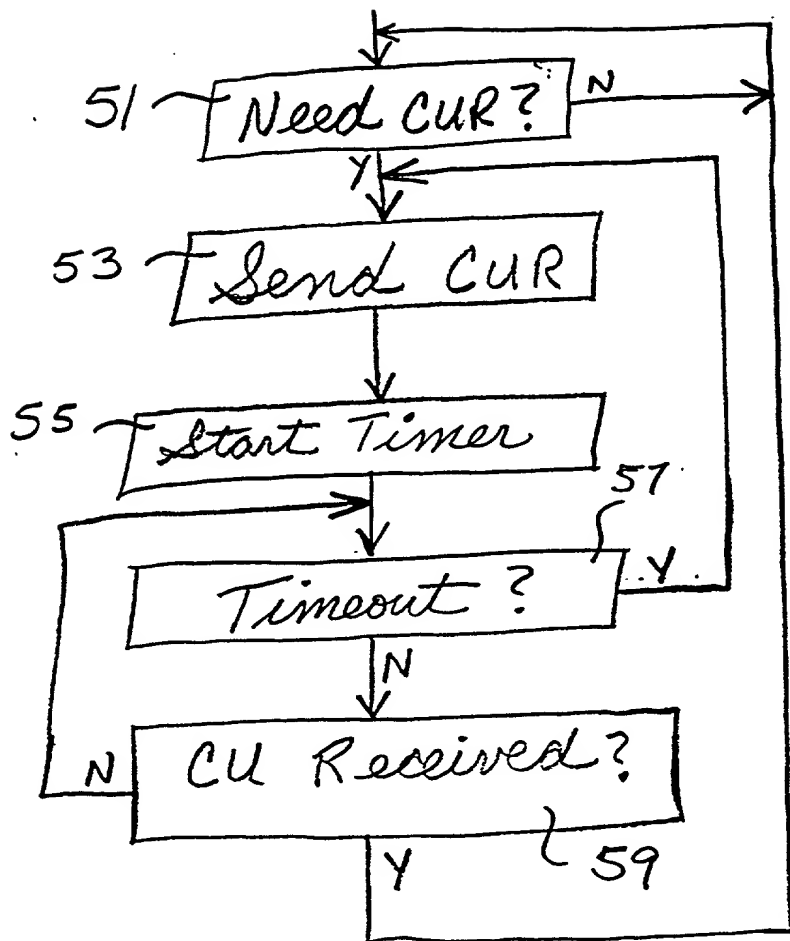


FIG. 5

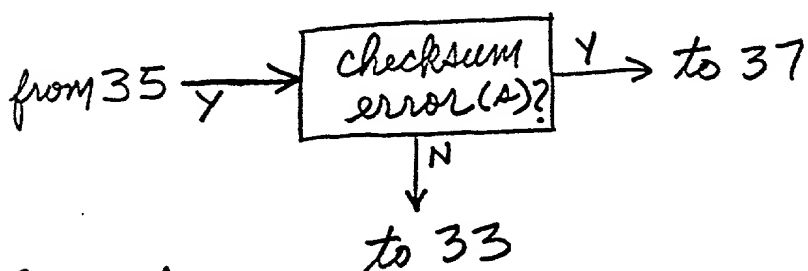


FIG. 3A

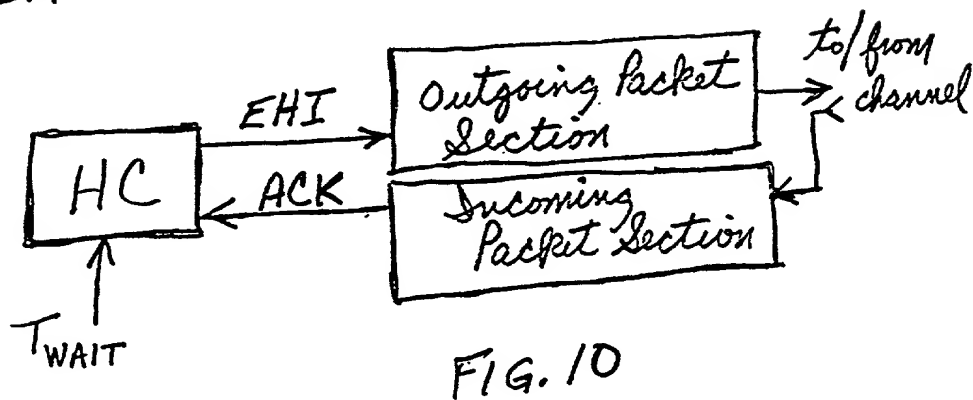


FIG. 10

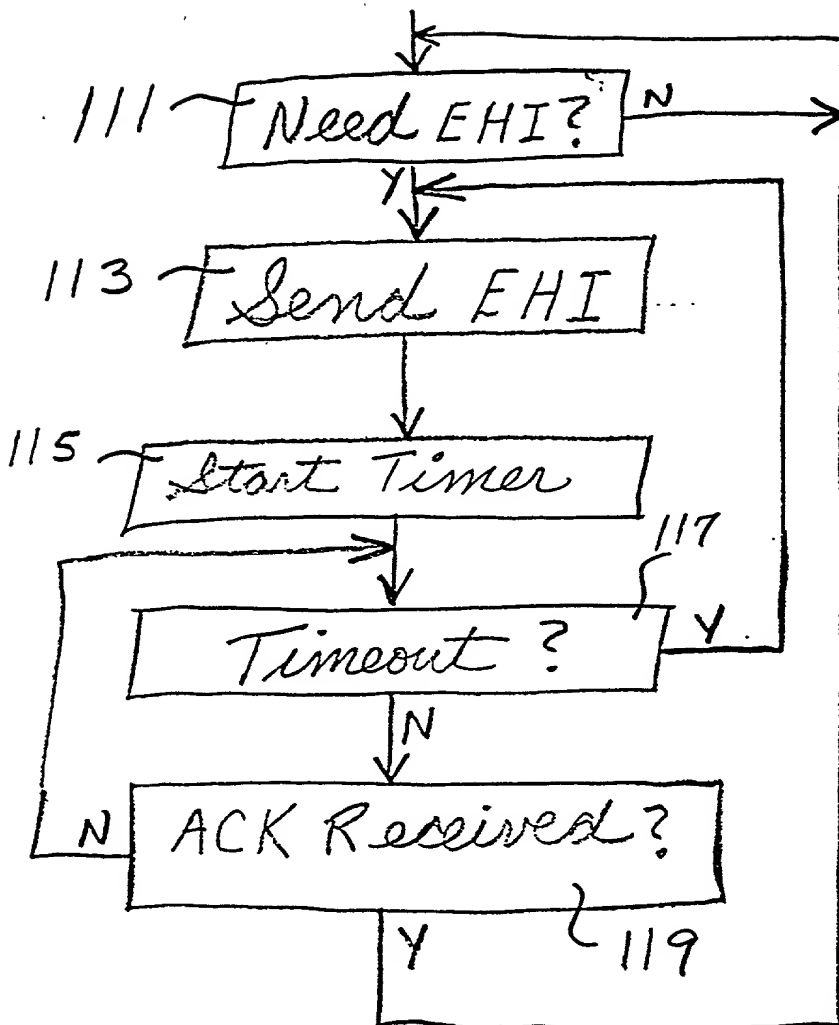


FIG. 11

**RULES 63 AND 67 (37 C.F.R. 1.63 and 1.67)**  
**DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY**

**FOR UTILITY/DESIGN/CIP/PCT NATIONAL APPLICATIONS**

As a below named inventors, we hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;  
and

I believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled: EFFICIENT HEADER COMPRESSION CONTEXT UPDATE IN PACKET COMMUNICATIONS, specification of which: (mark only one)

- X   (a) is attached hereto.  
      (b) was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_ and  
was amended on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable)  
      (c) was filed as PCT International Application No. PCT/\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable).  
      (d) was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_  
and was issued a Notice of Allowance on \_\_\_\_\_.  
      (e) was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ and bearing attorney docket number \_\_\_\_\_.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims as amended by any amendment referred to above or as allowed as indicated above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to the patentability of this application as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56. If this is a continuation-in-part (CIP) application, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the Office all information known to me to be material to patentability of the application as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this CIP application.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119/365 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate filed by me or my assignee



disclosing the subject matter claimed in this application and having a filing date (1) before that of the application on which my priority is claimed or, (2) if no priority is claimed, before the filing date of this application:

PRIOR FOREIGN PATENTS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Month/Day/Year Filed</u>	<u>Date first</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Priority Claimed</u>	
			<u>laid-open or Published</u>	<u>patented or Granted</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120/365 of any United States application(s) listed below and PCT international applications listed above or below:

PRIOR U.S. OR PCT APPLICATIONS

<u>Application No. (series code/serial no.)</u>	<u>Month/Day/Year Filed</u>	<u>Status(pending, abandoned, patented)</u>
60/188,284	March 7, 2000	Pending

I hereby appoint:

TIMOTHY G. ACKERMANN, Reg. No. 44,493  
 THOMAS E. ANDERSON, Reg. No. 37,063  
 BENJAMIN J. BAI, Reg. No. 43,481  
 MICHAEL J. BLANKSTEIN, Reg. No. 37,097  
 MARY JO BOLDINGH, Reg. No. 34,713  
 MARGARET A. BOULWARE, Reg. No. 28,708  
 ARTHUR J. BRADY, Reg. No. 42,356  
 MATTHEW O. BRADY, Reg. No. 44,554  
 DANIEL J. BURNHAM, Reg. No. 39,618  
 THOMAS L. CANTRELL, Reg. No. 20,849  
 RONALD B. COOLLEY, Reg. No. 27,187  
 THOMAS L. CRISMAN, Reg. No. 24,846  
 STUART D. DWORK, Reg. No. 31,103  
 WILLIAM F. ESSER, Reg. No. 38,053  
 ROGER J. FRENCH, Reg. No. 27,786  
 JANET M. GARETTO, Reg. No. 42,568  
 JOHN C. GATZ, Reg. No. 41,774  
 RUSSELL J. GENET, Reg. No. 42,571

GERALD H. GLANZMAN, Reg. No. 25,035  
 J. KEVIN GRAY, Reg. No. 37,141  
 STEVEN R. GREENFIELD, Reg. No. 38,166  
 JOSHUA A. GRISWOLD, Reg. No. 46,310  
 J. PAT HEPTIG, Reg. No. 40,643  
 SHARON A. ISRAEL, Reg. No. 41,867  
 JOHN R. KIRK JR., Reg. No. 24,477  
 PAUL R. KITCH, Reg. No. 38,206  
 TIMOTHY M. KOWALSKI, Reg. No. 44,192  
 JAMES F. LEA III, Reg. No. 41,143  
 HSIN-WEI LUANG, Reg. No. 44,213  
 ROBERT W. MASON, Reg. No. 42,848  
 ROGER L. MAXWELL, Reg. No. 31,855  
 ROBERT A. McFALL, Reg. No. 28,968  
 STEVEN T. McDONALD, Reg. No. 45,999  
 LISA H. MEYERHOFF, Reg. No. 36,869  
 STANLEY R. MOORE, Reg. No. 26,958  
 RICHARD J. MOURA, Reg. No. 34,883  
 MARK V. MULLER, Reg. No. 37,509  
 P. WESTON MUSSELMAN JR. Reg. No. 31,644

DANIEL G. NGUYEN, Reg. No. 42,933  
 SPENCER C. PATTERSON, Reg. No. 43,849  
 RUSSELL N. RIPPAMONTI, Reg. No. 39,521  
 ROSS T. ROBINSON, Reg. No. 47,031  
 STEPHEN G. RUDISILL, Reg. No. 20,087  
 HOLLY L. RUDNICK, Reg. No. 43,065  
 J.L. JENNIE SALAZAR, Reg. No. 45,065  
 KEITH W. SAUNDERS, Reg. No. 41,462  
 JERRY R. SELINGER, Reg. No. 26,582  
 GARY B. SOLOMON, Reg. No. 44,347  
 STEVE Z. SZCZEPANSKI, Reg. No. 27,957  
 ANDRE M. SZUWALSKI, Reg. No. 35,701  
 ALAN R. THIELE, Reg. No. 30,694  
 TAMSEN VALOIR, Reg. No. 41,417  
 RAYMOND VAN DYKE, Reg. No. 34,746  
 BRIAN D. WALKER, Reg. No. 37,751  
 GERALD T. WELCH, Reg. No. 30,332  
 HAROLD N. WELLS, Reg. No. 26,044  
 WILLIAM D. WIESE, Reg. No. 45,217

all of the firm of **JENKENS & GILCHRIST, P.C.**, 3200 Fountain Place, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2799, as my attorneys and/or agents, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application, provisionals thereof, continuations, continuations-in-part, divisionals, appeals, reissues, substitutions, and extensions thereof and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith, to appoint any individuals under an associate power of attorney and to file and prosecute any international patent application filed thereon before any international authorities, and I hereby authorize them to act and rely on instructions from and communicate directly with the person/assignee/attorney/firm/organization who/which first sent this case to them and by

whom/which I hereby declare that I have consented after full disclosure to be represented unless/until I instruct them in writing to the contrary.

Please address all correspondence and direct all telephone calls to:

Raymond Van Dyke  
Jenkins & Gilchrist, P.C.  
3200 Fountain Place  
1445 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, Texas 75202-2799  
214/855-4708 214/855-4300 (fax)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

**NAMED INVENTOR(S)**

1	Lars-Erik Jonsson <b>Full Name</b>	<b>Inventor's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Docentvägen 28 SE-977 52 LULEA Sweden <b>Residence</b> (city, state, country) <b>Swedish Citizenship</b>		
	Docentvägen 28 SE-977 52 LULEA Sweden <b>Post Office Address</b> (include zip code)		
2	Hans Hannu <b>Full Name</b>	<b>Inventor's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Professorsvägen 274 SE-977 51 LULEA Sweden <b>Residence</b> (city, state, country) <b>Swedish Citizenship</b>		
	Professorsvägen 274 SE-977 51 LULEA Sweden <b>Post Office Address</b> (include zip code)		

3	Krister Svanbro <b>Full Name</b>	<b>Inventor's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Mjölkuddsvägen 274 SE-973 43 LULEA Sweden <b>Residence</b> (city, state, country)		
	Mjölkuddsvägen 274 SE-973 43 LULEA Sweden <b>Post Office Address</b> (include zip code)		
4	Zolt Haraszti <b>Full Name</b>	<b>Inventor's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Helsingörsgatan 10, #76 SE-164 44 KISTA Sweden <b>Residence</b> (city, state, country)		
	Helsingörsgatan 10, #76 SE-164 44 KISTA Sweden <b>Post Office Address</b> (include zip code)		
5	Anders Furuskär <b>Full Name</b>	<b>Inventor's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Vanadisvägen 8 SE-113 46 STOCKHOLM Sweden <b>Residence</b> (city, state, country)		
	Vanadisvägen 8 SE-113 46 STOCKHOLM Sweden <b>Post Office Address</b> (include zip code)		